

Pat Bauer

Indiana State Representative, District 6



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget, which I authored, includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at H6@ai.org or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,



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New budget increases school support, local development

As author of the budget bill that became law, we continue our record of avoiding general tax increases while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects. Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education.

The budget enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

Services and local development

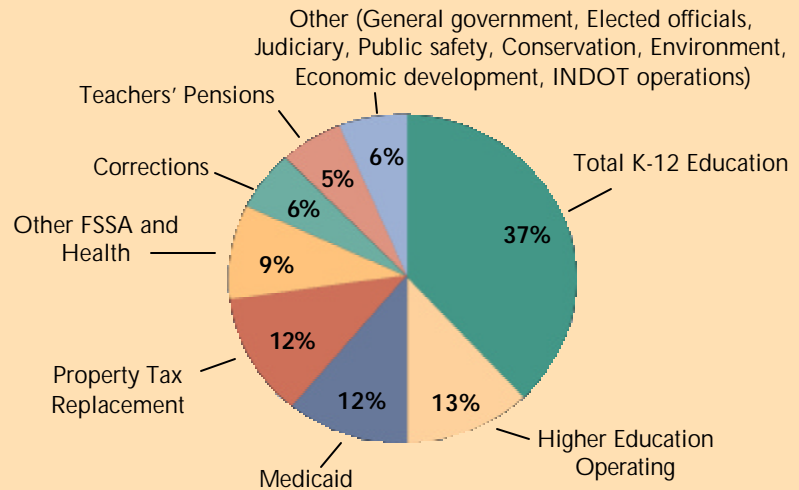
The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



Legislative issues affecting kids



REP. BAUER MEETS WITH REP. BRIAN HASLER (D - EVANSVILLE) IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER.

Children who turn five years of age by July 1 will be able to attend kindergarten classes that fall through a provision included in the state budget. Local schools will be able to access materials that provide instruction on resolving conflicts in the classroom, thanks to House Enrolled Act 1971. The

same bill also enables school principals to be evaluated on criteria apart from student scores on the ISTEP exam.

Curfew and teen workers

Indiana's curfew law for juveniles was ruled unconstitutional last year, but House Enrolled Act 1084 makes changes in the law to conform with recent cases. These changes enable youths to stay out past the curfew if they are engaged in certain activities protected by federal and state laws, including school and religious functions. House Enrolled Act 1367 requires employers to give any teenage worker a 30-minute break if that employee is working at least six hours in a day.



Schools and social services focus of Bauer legislation

I authored legislation this year that allows the South Bend Community School Corporation to change their budget year from a calendar year to a school year.



REP. BAUER ADDRESSES THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

I co-authored legislation that requires the Family and Social Services Agency to develop a plan to assure that services provided under programs administered by them match the needs of the individuals receiving the services as closely as possible. This should provide a continuum of care for the elderly and disabled.

License branch improvements underway

Changes enacted by the Legislature this year should reduce the lines at the BMV license branches and make it easier to get your business done.

House Enrolled Act 1170 contains the following changes:

Drivers will be able to renew their licenses through the mail and over the Internet.

- Drivers will be able to register their vehicles in any county.

- Vehicle registration deadlines will be staggered to reduce lines. Deadlines will come twice a month.

- The state will have to conduct a public hearing before closing any license branch.

In addition, transaction fees will increase by 50 cents to finance technological improvements.

Build Indiana Funds go to District 6



REP. BAUER DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH SPEAKER JOHN GREGG (D - SANDBORN).

S.O.S. (Rape crisis center) South Bend	\$25,000
Hannah's House Mishawaka	\$25,000
YWCA South Bend	\$50,000
YMCA of Michiana South Bend	\$50,000
WVPE at IUSB (National Public Radio)	\$50,000
El Buen Vecino South Bend	\$25,000
Arboretum South Bend	\$50,000
Studebaker South Bend	\$50,000
Palais Royale Ballroom renovation South Bend	\$50,000
South Bend Regional Museum of Art South Bend	\$50,000
South Bend Remedy Project	\$50,000
Northern Indiana Center for History South Bend	\$25,000



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2001 Legislature enacts election reform

Stay informed about this and other issues online with Representative Bauer



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In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The

same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

Through provisions contained in House Enrolled Act 1510, the state has moved closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.